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**USDA DESIGNATES ONE COUNTY IN OREGON AS A NATURAL DISASTER AREA
Decision Allows Farmers and Ranchers to Apply for USDA Assistance**

WASHINGTON, July 18, 2006 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture designated one county in Oregon as a primary natural disaster area, making all qualified farm operators in the designated area eligible for low-interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Malheur County was designated a primary natural disaster areas due to losses caused by flooding, cooler temperatures and abnormally high precipitation that occurred from March 29, 2006, through May 10, 2006. Also eligible because they are contiguous are Baker, Grant and Harney Counties.

Also eligible because they are contiguous are the following counties in Idaho and Nevada:

Idaho Canyon, Owyhee, Payette and Washington Counties

Nevada Humboldt County

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas on July 13, 2006, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for EM loans, provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the emergency loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

USDA has also made other programs available to assist farmers and ranchers, including the Emergency Conservation Program, Federal Crop Insurance and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program.

Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs.

Additional information is also available online at:

<http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

FSA news releases and media advisories are available on FSA's Web site at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

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